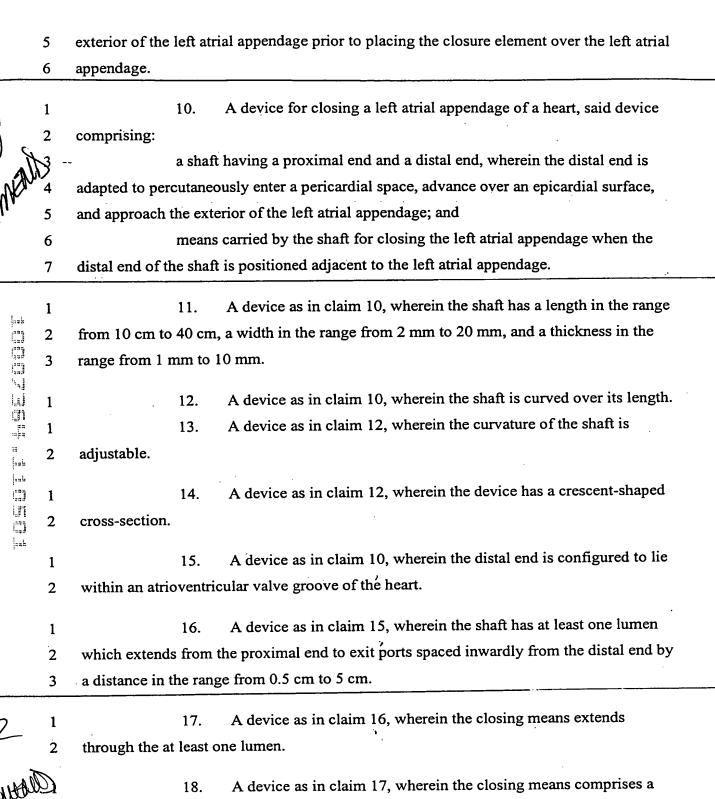
## WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

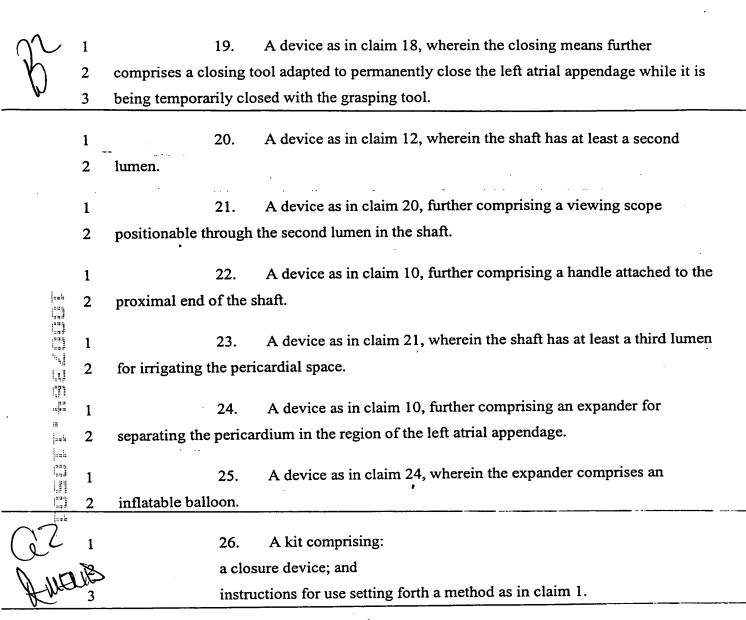
1	1. Amethod for closing a left atrial appendage of a patient's heart,
2	said method comprising:
3	positioning a closure instrument through a percutaneous passage beneath
4	the rib cage, over an epicardial surface, and adjacent to the left atrial appendage; and
5	closing the left atrial appendage using the closure instrument.
1	2. A method as in claim 1, wherein positioning comprises making an
2	incision between a costal cartilage and a xiphoid of the patient and placing an access
3	sheath through the incision into a pericardial space.
1	3. A method as in claim 2, wherein positioning further comprises
2	advancing a distal end of the closure instrument through the sheath, into the pericardial
3	space, and over an epicardial surface to an atrioventricular groove of the heart.
	Like when electing comprises looping
1	4. A method as in claims, wherein closing comprises looping,
2	suturing, stapling, clipping, riveting, clamping, or fusing the left atrial appendage at a
3	neck region thereof.
1	5. A method as in claim 4, wherein closing further comprises
2	grasping the left atrial appendage prior to closing the neck region thereof.
1	6. A method as in claim 1, wherein the method is performed while the
2	patient's heart is beating.
1	7. A method as in claim 6, wherein the method is performed while
2	both lungs of the patient remain inflated.
1	8. A method as in claim 7, wherein the method is performed while the
2	patient is under a local anesthetic.
1	9. An improved method for closing a left atrial appendage of a heart,
2	said method being of the type wherein a closure element is placed over an exterior of the
3	appendage while the patient's chest remains closed, wherein the improvement comprises
4	advancing the closure element from beneath the rib cage over an epicardial surface to the
	N.



grasping tool which extends through one of the lumens, said grasping tool being adapted

to temporarily grasp the left atrial appendage.

3



A method as in claim 1, further comprising separating the parietal 27. 1 pericardium from the visceral pericardium near left atrial appendage prior to closing the 2 left atrial appendage to create a space over the atrial appendage. 3

A method as in claim 2 1 further comprising viewing the atrial 28. appendage through the space. 2

1

